



Gulf Savannah Development Inc.

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MEMBERSHIP PROSPECTUS 2023-24

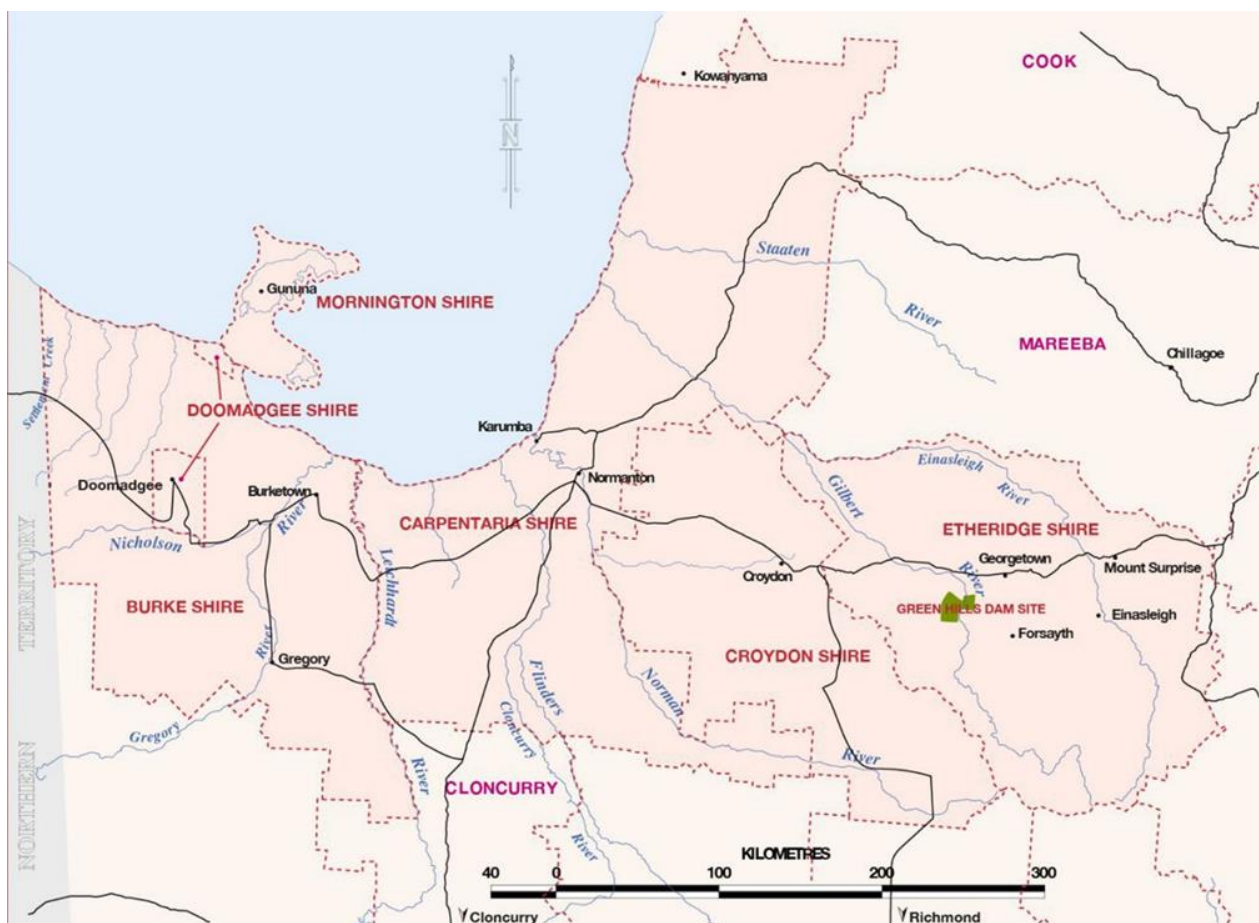
About Gulf Savannah Development Inc

Gulf Savannah Development (GSD) is the facilitating organisation for the Gulf Savannah region that drives economic development projects and initiatives for the benefit of its stakeholders.

As the central representative body actively advocating for Councils, businesses, organisations and community in the region, our primary goal is to bring together organisations/people, ideas and resources to deliver impactful projects that ensure the future sustainability of the Gulf Region. GSD is a registered not-for-profit charity that exists to serve members, regional stakeholders and the entire Gulf Savannah region.

Since 1974, GSD has worked in partnership with Councils, industry and community to drive and support economic growth across a range of sectors including agriculture and fisheries, tourism, aviation, resources, energy, renewables, infrastructure and all levels of community and business. GSD connects these sectors and the region with all levels of Government, securing funding, delivering projects, advocating change and influencing policy. In 2024, GSD celebrates its 50th birthday!

Map 1 : The Gulf Savannah region



Map 2: The Savannah Way

We are part of the iconic Savannah Way, one of Australia's great outback travel routes. A key priority is sealing the Savannah Way, and facilitating economic and tourism product development along the Way.



GSD – focus, successes, opportunities and priorities

Our key areas of **focus** are:

- **Facilitation** – regional, all industries, community & across all three levels of government
- **Project delivery** - driving projects for regional benefit
- **Advocacy** – coordinated regional voice

Our recent **successes** include:

- Delivering a *Gulf Savannah Regional Electricity and Energy Supply Proposal* (co-funded by Queensland Government, Mirabou Energy and GSD-2023)
- *Gulf Savannah Cropping Development 'How to' Manual* (funded by Queensland Government-2023)
- *Indigenous and Regional Tourism Pipeline of Investment Opportunities* (funded by Queensland Government-2022)
- *Tourism Products in the Gulf – moving from retail to wholesale* (funded by Queensland Government-2021)
- *Gulf Academy Business Case* funded by Queensland Government-2021)
- *Greenhouse Feasibility Study* (Funded by Queensland Government-2021)
- *Gulf Savannah Regional Branding Strategy* (Funded by Queensland Government-2020)
- *Farm-Station Stay Manual* (funded by Queensland Government-2020)

There have also been many other reports, including the *Lower Gulf and Riverine Economic Development Strategy* (2018), which have been facilitated by GSD.

Our regional **opportunities** include:

- **North West Minerals Province** – access & exports
- **Decarbonisation** – industry development: diversification, biofuels, renewable energy
- **Sustainability** – local food production, energy, growing local economies, remote and Indigenous communities
- **Resilience** – strengthening community and infrastructure; prepare, respond, recover
- **Visitor economy** – developing new products, Indigenous experiences

Our current **regional challenges and priorities** include:

- **Connectivity & accessibility** – bridges, roads, rail, air, sea & digital
 - everyday access to the region
 - improving commercial access to the Port
 - reducing impacts of natural disasters
 - improving regional liveability & health services
- **Common user infrastructure** – economic development

- Water security – facilitate agriculture precincts
- Energy – affordable energy for residents & businesses
- Accommodation – housing & short-term visitor
- Workforce – attraction & retention
- Affordability – improving the liveability of residents and businesses

GSD governance arrangements

GSD is governed by a Management Committee that is elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. Current elected Management Committee members are:

Position	Name	Member
Chair	Cr Ernie Camp (Mayor, Burke Shire Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke Shire Council (Council Partner) • Floraville Downs (Savannah Diamond)
Deputy Chair	Cr Brad Hawkins (Deputy Mayor, Carpentaria Shire Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpentaria Shire Council (Council Partner)
Treasurer	Shaun Jorgensen (Manager Finance/ IT, Burke Shire Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke Shire Council (Council Partner)
Special Interest Director	Paul Poole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savannah Aviation (Savannah Gold)
Special Interest Director	Currently vacant	
Secretary	Neil O'Brien (CEO, GSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex-officio appointment

To maximise regional representation and advice, the Management Committee operates as a Board involving members elected at the AGM as well as other members, including representatives from REX Airlines, Burke Shire Council, Carpentaria Shire Council, Etheridge Shire Council, Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and Department of State Development and Infrastructure. The Board provides strategic oversight and direction to the Chief Executive Officer and GSD's operations to ensure it effectively delivers on behalf of its members, the region and stakeholders.

About our Chief Executive Officer

Neil O'Brien was appointed as Chief Executive Officer, Gulf Savannah Development in September 2023, and is operating from bases in Cairns, the Gulf Savannah region and Brisbane. His appointment to this role continues five proud generations of family who have worked, lived and contributed to the development of the Gulf Savannah region.

Neil is results driven and has extensive executive experience leading tourism and major events, infrastructure and experience development, biosecurity, and corporate and business services.

With broad and extensive background in public sector leadership, Neil brings strong skills and abilities to the CEO role which have been built over 37 years in the Queensland public sector, across seven agencies in regional and South-East Queensland, in front line operational, corporate and strategic roles, including over 19 years in senior and executive leadership positions in tourism, major events, agriculture and fisheries.

Neil has a proven track record in leading change in difficult and complex environments, and has demonstrated strong performance in regional program delivery, project facilitation, grant and funding management, infrastructure development, investment attraction, aviation route development, commercial negotiations, emergency management, program administration and service delivery, stakeholder engagement and relationship management, intergovernmental relations, corporate services, business services, and governance.

As CEO, Neil will focus on making a real difference in growing and developing the region using his advocacy and negotiation skills, working with all stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities, leveraging funding to deliver agreed priorities, and collaborating with others to deliver projects.

GSD membership

During 2023-24, GSD will strategically review its Rules of Association, governance structure, membership levels and membership prospectus.

In 2023-24, while the review is undertaken, GSD will maintain its current levels of membership:

- Gulf Council or Savannah Partner - \$30,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Diamond - \$15,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Sapphire - \$7,500 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Platinum - \$4,500 (excl. GST)
- Small business (10 staff or less) - \$2,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Gold - \$530 (excl. GST)

Services and support delivered under the membership can be tailored to any prospective member's needs.

Benefits of being a member

- GSD is the only organisation established with the sole purpose to advocate for the Gulf Savannah region, to work with stakeholders and its members to deliver sustainable economic development projects in the Gulf Savannah region, and to advance the interests of Councils, business, industry, community and visitors within the Gulf Savannah region.
- Council members are direct beneficiaries of GSD's status as a not-for-profit and Remote Area Board. By being a member, Councils secure access to GSD's Remote Area Board funding to progress economic development, regional projects and priorities, and GSD's not-for-profit status facilitates access to funding that Councils and other regional stakeholders cannot access.
- Our new CEO's significant government experience, and extensive leadership skills developing industry and infrastructure, attracting investment, managing programs, delivering projects and engaging stakeholders, is steering GSD through a new stage of its development. Members will directly benefit from his expertise, contacts, commercial acumen and advocacy skills.
- Gulf Council and Savannah Diamond members may join all Management Committee meetings to govern GSD and set strategy and direction. Other members are eligible to be elected to the Management Committee.
- The CEO of GSD is active in working in partnership with other economic development and representative organisations agencies in North Queensland, including Advance Cairns, Mount Isa-Townsville Economic Zone, several Regional Organisation of Councils/Alliance of Councils, Tropical Tourism North Queensland, Outback Queensland Tourism Association, Natural Resource Management groups and Regional Development Australia. Members will benefit from these partnerships.
- GSD and Members can negotiate services to be delivered under any membership package, including delivery of agreed projects that will benefit the Gulf Savannah region, and its members, stakeholders, and community. GSD also provides a fee for service consultancy service.
- Grant funding support – targeted grant and other funding opportunities will be discussed with members. Members may access GSD's expertise to prepare grant applications.
- Other benefits will include: invitation to all GSD events; notice of events occurring in the region; regular GSD communiques.

Membership enquiries

Our CEO would welcome the opportunity to further discuss what membership would mean for you and how GSD could further drive economic development and initiatives for the benefit of all of its stakeholders, including your organisation. To discuss membership opportunities and benefits of joining GSD, please contact our CEO:

Neil O'Brien

email nobrien@gulf-savannah.com.au

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